

Claim Amendments

1. (currently amended) A convertible inflatable furnishing which comprises an inflatable base including a base upper skin which forms a layer of the upper side of the base, a base lower skin which forms a layer of the lower side of the base, and a rim side which links the edge of the upper side of the base to the edge of the lower side of the base, an inflatable backrest, a fixing means to fix the backrest to the base upper skin, and an air passage between the base and the backrest allowing a flow of air between the inside of the base and the inside of the backrest when loads on the base and backrest change; said fixing means consists of a flexible closed-loop strip forming a single hole with the internal surface of the flexible closed-loop strip not substantially adhered to itself at any place to form a hinge, an upper edge of the flexible closed-loop strip permanently connected to a lower end of the backrest and a lower edge of the flexible closed-loop strip permanently connected to the base upper skin is non-translocatable; said fixing means is sufficiently flexible to allow the backrest to recline increasingly with deflation of the backrest including when the backrest is under an increasing load, and allow the backrest to erect increasingly with inflation of the backrest including when the load on the backrest is reducing.

2-4. (canceled)

5. (previously presented) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 1 wherein a connecting means is provided completely inside the base to connect a region of the base upper skin to a region of the base lower skin with the connecting means being in tension when the base is substantially inflated and the connecting means having such a length as to constrain horizontal mobility of the base upper skin relative to the base lower skin; wherein the connecting means includes an elastic material to absorb pressure shocks by reducing the maximum tension resulting from sudden loads applied to the furnishing.

6. (canceled).

7. (previously presented) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 5 wherein the connecting means includes an elastic material biasing the region of the base upper skin towards the region of the base lower skin, wherein the connecting means is connected to the base upper skin at a location where the front side of the backrest is joined to the base upper skin allowing tension in the elastic material to transmit through the base upper skin to the front side of the backrest, the elastic material in tension having a elastic modulus capable of supporting an increased load on the backrest wherein the supporting force tending to maintain erection of the backrest is increased when the base volumetrically expands due to increased pressurization of the base resulting from increased compression of the backrest.

8-14. (canceled)

15. (previously presented) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 5 wherein the bladder is fully enclosed by a cover, the base lower skin and the base upper skin are parts of the cover, and the bladder is of any size and shape that when inflated

fills the cover and applies tension substantially throughout the cover so that the shape of the cover substantially determines the shape of the furnishing.

16. (previously presented) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 15 wherein the inflated bladder is tubular with sealed ends and the axis of the tubular bladder is curved in a substantially planar path surrounding the connecting means and the bladder is sufficiently long that a region of the bladder in the vicinity of one sealed end of the bladder abuts a region of the bladder in the vicinity of the other sealed end of the bladder.

17-21. (canceled)

22. (new) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 1 wherein the fixing means is the only connection connecting the base to the backrest.

23. (new) A convertible inflatable furnishing which comprises a gas-permeable cover fully enclosing a flexible bladder, wherein the gas-permeable cover is shaped to form a seat with a base and a backrest and the flexible bladder is not shaped similarly to the gas-permeable cover when it is inflated outside the gas-permeable cover.

24. (new) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 23 which further comprises a connecting means inside the gas-permeable cover connecting a lower portion of the backrest front side portion of the gas-permeable cover to the base lower side portion of the gas-permeable cover and preferably but not necessarily attaching to the base lower side more forward than the attachment of the connecting means to the lower portion of the backrest front side, and the flexible bladder when inflated fills the whole gas-permeable cover.

25. (new) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 24 wherein the backrest front side is shaped to provide a substantially smooth unfolded surface above the place of attachment of the connecting means to the lower portion of the backrest front side thereby facilitating an even and uninterrupted flow of tension up the backrest front side.

26. (new) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 24 wherein a region of the gas-permeable cover is flexible and shaped as a loop encircling the backrest and including a lower region of the backrest front side and optionally including a rear region of the base adjoining the backrest.

27. (new) The convertible inflatable furnishing of claim 23 wherein the flexible bladder has a fully inflated volume outside the gas-permeable cover at least twenty percent greater than its fully inflated volume inside the gas-permeable cover with said volumes being measured at a pressure less than two kilopascals.

End of Claim Amendments